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Personnel Infiltration

There have been no detections of regular infiltration groups in North Vietnam since 4 March. However, a number of special-purpose groups have been detected very recently.

When intercepts indicate that the COMINT groups were to move south on 10-11 March.

The details of these most current detections are as follows:

- On 19 March, 16 special-purpose infiltration groups moved through Binh Tram 18 in ^{the} Vinh area. According to COMINT, these groups -- with a total strength of more than 400 -- were comprised of "civilian administrators". These were the first groups observed entering the pipeline in North Vietnam since 4 March.
- A second message, which also originated from Binh Tram 18 on 19 March (but which was just received) contained the initial reference to special-purpose group QL174. The strength of the group was not reported. The detection of the sixteen "A" groups noted above and group QL174 raises the total number of special-purpose groups detected at Binh Tram 18 since 28 January to 57.
- In addition to these firm detections of southbound special-purpose groups, a 20 March message revealed the existence of 345 "civilian administrators" and

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"framework cadres" within Binh Tram 18's area of responsibility. Although the context of the message makes it difficult to determine the direction of travel of these personnel, it seems more likely that they are southbound-moving, primarily because references to "civilian administrators" have always denoted southbound groups.

Currently, we estimate that there are some 20,000 personnel in the infiltration pipeline, of whom about one-half are estimated to have departed North Vietnam after the cease-fire date.

Since the cease-fire, a higher-than-normal percentage of detections have been of special-purpose infiltration groups. Of the 59 groups detected at Binh Tram 18 on or after 28 January, all but two were special-purpose groups. Although the proportion of special-purpose groups is much smaller when all detections since the cease-fire are considered, (including those in Laos and Cambodia) the number of civilian and military specialists currently traveling southward is significantly higher than usual -- a bit less than 10% of total infiltrating personnel.

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Since 28 January, nearly 15,000 infiltrators are estimated to have arrived at their destinations in South Vietnam,

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(When intercepted message)
indicated that two
Such groups would move
through the Vinh area on
10-11 March.

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The most significant change potentially in the pattern of infiltration behaviour, however, is the fact that no regular infantry groups have been reported entering the pipeline in North Vietnam since 4 March. This may ^{simply} indicate that Hanoi is approaching the end of its programmed 1972/73 dry season infiltration cycle. On the other hand, it also is possible that some additional regular infantry infiltration has gone undetected.

Cambodia, and southern Laos. This number includes personnel who have arrived in the COSVN area of Cambodia, some of whom may not yet have been assigned to their final areas of destination in southern South Vietnam. If this factor is considered, arrivals in South Vietnam since 28 January are probably closer to 13,000, although this is necessarily a soft estimate.

Almost all of the armor and artillery groups infiltrated south this dry season are believed to have now arrived at their destinations, although a few stragglers and disabled tanks are still being observed in the pipeline. Probably about one-third of the total of around 450 tanks being deployed had arrived at its destination by 28 January, i. e., approximately two-thirds has arrived in South Vietnam since the cease-fire. On artillery, our evidence is spongy, but we would estimate that the artillery situation is roughly similar to the armor, though perhaps a slightly lower proportion of the total artillery input had reached South Vietnam by 28 January.